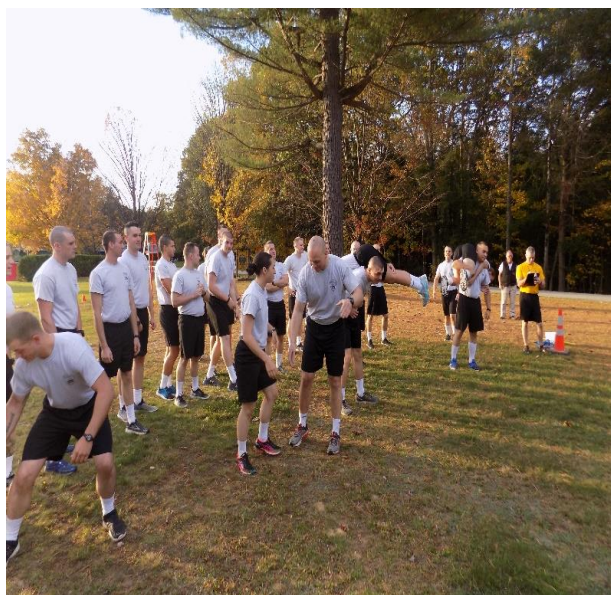


## 2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### TRAINING CENTER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SAFETY REPORT

Submitted January 2022

#### ROBERT H. WOOD JR. CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND FIRE SERVICE TRAINING CENTER



## 2021 TRAINING CENTER GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE SAFETY REPORT

Pursuant to Number 118, Section 12. 29 V.S.A. § 842 (a), there is a safety subcommittee created under the Training Center Governance Committee. The safety subcommittee shall meet annually on or before February 1, review the safety records of the Training Facility and, on or before July 1, submit to the Training Center Governance Committee its recommendations on how safety at the Training Facility can be improved upon.

The Training Center Governance Committee shall review the report and shall consider the recommendations of the safety committee. The Training Center Governance Committee shall report annually, on or before January 15. The report shall address any safety issues discovered at the Training Facility and what steps, if any, have been taken to remedy those issues, and whether the Governance Committee has instituted any of the changes.

This Document was prepared by the members of the Training Center Governance Committee and the Training Safety Sub-Committee. The document has been reviewed and approved at a committee meeting held on December 27, 2021.

DocuSigned by:

*Michael Desrochers*

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Michael Desrochers, Executive Director  
Division of Fire Safety  
Chair, Training Center Governance Committee

1/6/2022

Date

DocuSigned by:

*Heather Simons*

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Heather Simons, Executive Director  
Vermont Criminal Justice Council  
Training Center Governance Committee

1/6/2022

Date

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Training Center Governance Committee convened with members of the Safety Sub-Committee with respect to the content in this legislative report. Law enforcement and firefighter training occur on campus in Pittsford and off campus throughout the state. The Fire Academy relies on two national safety standards and Standard Operating Guidelines to guide instructors through a consistent application of course delivery. The Vermont Police Academy follows rules, statutes, best practices, and court rendered decisions. Both are specified below:

### **Vermont Fire Academy:**

- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Standards. NFPA 1403 – *Standard on Live Fire Training Evolutions* is applied to ensure the safety of instructors and students.
- The Fire Academy has created a rehabilitation program based on NFPA 1583 - *Standard on Health-Related Fitness Programs for Fire Department Members* to ensure all personnel are physically capable of starting and continuing strenuous activity.
- The Fire Academy follows Vermont Fire Service Training Council approved Standard Operating Guidelines, Procedures and a Fire Instructor Handbook to ensure training is delivered as a safe as possible in a consistent manner.

### **Vermont Police Academy**

- Training is delivered through rules outlined in the Vermont Criminal Justice Council Administrative Procedures.
- Vermont Statute include 20 V.S.A. § 2351, 20 V.S.A. § 2352, and 20 V.S.A., Chapter 151
- State and Federal court decisions which evolve and change regularly.
- Nationally recommended best practices from a host of different law enforcement entities such as the International Association of Police Chiefs (IACP), The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), and expert committee recommendations.

In calendar year 2021 despite significant shifts in training procedures due to COVID-19, the Police and Fire Academy's developed ways to safely train emergency responders. Great focus was placed on creating a safe environment where cognitive learning involved full student participation often using nontraditional methods, and psychomotor skills were practiced and tested in a manner that continued to maintain a high standard. Because of this the student numbers were a bit lower. Vermont Fire Academy trained approximately 182 students in certified programs and 275 in other courses. While the Vermont Police Academy trained 53 law enforcement officers in Level – III basic training and 22 law enforcement officers in Level – II basic training programs. This equals approximately 80,000 student contact hours. In 2021, of the reportable injuries there were 2 firefighters and 12 from law enforcement. To put this into perspective an injury occurred once in

every 4,450 hours of training. It should be noted that the reporting policies between the two agencies mirror each other.

The movement by both agencies to work together and share policies has become more noticeable as a result of the inception of the Training Center Governance Committee and the Safety Sub-Committee. In addition to the Safety-Sub Committee meetings, staff from the Police and Fire Academies meet regularly to share information. Examples of this are evident throughout this document. It is also clear both agencies examine past injury reports to understand how to prevent future injuries. The committee looks at proactive ways to reduce the overall number of injuries through programs like Exertional Heat Stroke recognition training for our instructional staff. We also met regularly to discuss when the campus should have visitor entry restrictions and stipulations during COVID.

The Fire Academy and Police Academy have well-established protocols on reporting injuries and when considering how many students are trained in a year in the respective professions, the training center continues to have an excellent safety record. We also recognize that a single injury is one to many.

In 2021 the legislature awarded \$50,000 in funding for a two-part study to address safety issues within two separate buildings. The first part is to determine if a roof can be installed over the small arms range. In the winter months there is an ice issue on the ground of the range. This study will determine if a roof can be installed on this structure without compromising the open-air design of the range, determine the cost, and a rough sketch of a new roof system.

The second part of the study is for the Main Building, gym, and West Cottages. The Main Building and West Cottage have several structural, electrical, and HVAC issues that need upgrades. The existing and future layout of these buildings will be reviewed to understand where classrooms, sleeping area, and training areas should be located within the existing structure. This study will also give us a vision for future funding request via the capital bill.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Training Center Governance Committee was created in 2015 under the authority of Act 26. The purpose of the committee is to govern access, use, and future capital investments at the training facility for efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, economy and continuity of operations. The Governance Committee provides a single voice to the legislature on key areas of responsibility ensuring all users are represented resulting in continued fair access and use of the facility. The Governance Committee also provides an avenue for users to resolve conflicts on the site and brings a consistent management system to the facility. A primary goal of the Governance Committee is to pave a path forward working with the Vermont Legislature to enhance the infrastructure of the aging 1907 training center facility so we can better prepare our first responders and emergency service personnel. Since 2015, the Governance Committee has been able to constructively use its

authority to enhance the facility's use by working collaboratively together with the same visions and goals for long term sustainability.

Delivering training to those who respond to and manage dangerous situations can present challenges to the instructors. Firefighters and law enforcement officers have an inherent risk of injury on the job and at training. The risk of injury is clearly associated with physical attributes.

***Vermont Fire Academy*** delivers training using national safety standards/models published by the National Fire Protection Association, coupled with Standard Operating Guidelines to address specific safety concerns. Title 20, Chapter 179 of Vermont Statutes requires that a Fire Training Council govern Fire Academy training.

***Vermont Police Academy*** delivers training through rules outlined in the Vermont Criminal Justice Council Administrative Procedures, Vermont Statute, State and Federal court decisions (which evolve and change regularly), nationally recommended best practices from a host of different law enforcement entities such as the International Association of Police Chiefs (IACP), The International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training (IADLEST), and expert committee recommendations.

## **JOINT INITIATIVE ON INJURY REPORTING POLICY**

An Injury Report Form was created jointly by the Vermont Police Academy and Vermont Fire Academy. Instructor(s) administering training in which an injury is reported are required to submit an Injury Report Form documenting the event. This reporting tool allows for the collection of information from multiple people. All reports are reviewed by the Safety Sub-Committee as needed and presented to the Training Center Governance Committee with recommendations on how to reduce or mitigate the injury. Any injury that is defined by OSHA 300, as a recordable work-related injury and illness are those that result in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, one or more days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, diagnosis of a significant injury, loss of consciousness, or death will be reported appropriately and documented within this report.



## **POLICE AND FIRE ACADEMY'S INJURY REPORTS**

The following are the individual reports for the Police and Fire Academy as submitted by both agencies. The report reflects training related injuries from January 1, 2021 through December 16, 2021. The individual report includes current injury reporting data, explanation of injuries, and the mitigation and prevention of future injuries. The Safety Committee met on August 18, and December 16, 2021 to review past and future program deliveries to ensure best safety practices are in place.

### **Vermont Police Academy**



**Recruits at the Firing Range**



**Recruit Driving on the Driving Pad**

The Vermont Police Academy administers training in accordance with rules outlined by Vermont Criminal Justice Council Administrative Procedures, Vermont Statutes, Federal Law, State and Federal court decisions (evolving regularly) and nationally recommended best practices from entities such as the IACP, IADLEST, CALEA, ASCIA, FOP, etc. The Vermont Criminal Justice Council (Council) is comprised of 24 members, twelve preexisting members and twelve new members, which include seven Governor appointees and five new positions. With the vision to create lasting community partnerships and high standards of excellence The Vermont Criminal Justice Council created 17 subcommittees and working groups to focus on the overall mission of safety and excellence in Vermont law enforcement. These committees further recommend best practices and policies to aid in governing Academy operations. The Academy utilizes a manual of internal standard operation procedures to further guide operations and processes.

The mission of the Vermont Criminal Justice Council is to improve public safety by promoting excellence in law enforcement through the implementation of the highest standards for training, certification, and recognized best practices. The Academy's vision is to consistently advance standards of excellence within the law enforcement community. This is accomplished through the enlistment of the highest standards in training and professionalism, fostering partnerships, promoting teamwork, and providing a modern, efficient, and welcoming training environment where everyone is encouraged and empowered to succeed.

## **Injury Prevention Measures**

Injury forecasting and prevention continue to be a priority for the Vermont Police Academy; the safety of trainees at the basic and in-service levels is always of paramount importance. All injury mitigation strides the Academy has made have become a routine part of institutional culture. In addition to the steps taken in recent years, additional injury mitigation processes have been instituted. Academy staff are open to further methodologies and are constantly seeking ways to not only improve training, but also to ensure training is administered in as safe a manner as possible. The Academy continues to take a holistic approach to the physical and psychological safety of training participants. The injury mitigation and prevention methods outlined in this document are new for Calendar Year 2021. Please refer to prior publications of this report for a more thorough description of the Academy's ongoing and evolving injury prevention and mitigation measures.

## **COVID-19 Mitigation:**

Covid-19 and the fluctuating risks that continue to impact the community with variants, keeps the Academy vigilant in its operations, especially during the residential programs. Academy staff continue to evaluate procedures and mitigation strategies for Covid-19 to decrease the overall impact to law enforcement and the community as a whole. This year's report focuses on COVID specific changes the Academy has enacted to continue to train Vermont's law enforcement officers at all levels spanning from basic Level-II and Level-III, to advanced in-service training.

Academy staff has worked tirelessly to implement a plan to continue to train a full class of recruits which has at times included more stringent measures of operation even when the State increased freedom in the community through the Vermont Forward Plan. Critically low numbers of law enforcement throughout the state made specific Covid operational changes relevant to uphold. To ensure the work force is protected, the Academy is currently closed to all outside entities using the facility. Only instructors or visitors involved in training critical programs are permitted so that we can reduce the number of potential exposures to current and future certified officers.

During Covid, Academy operations during the basic training classes had to be limited in size to accommodate safety in the facility. Due to this inability to operate at full mass and with law enforcement numbers being critically low the Academy has added another Level III class for the current year. To ensure that the Academy can continue operating regardless of the potential risks brought about by Covid and the Delta variant, covid measures still exist and remote learning opportunities continue to be used when appropriate. Recruits and instructors are screened, distance measures are taken anywhere possible, vaccinations are encouraged, and masking is implemented when necessary.

In addition to what has been done to keep recruits safe during basic training, other practices have been enacted to keep in-service training staff and participants as safe as possible. Anyone authorized to be on the campus is required to self-screen prior to arrival. This includes temperature checks and standard health screening questions. Level-II recruits and testing applicants are limited

to one classroom, specific bathrooms and a specified building entrance and exit to keep them isolated from the Level-III class.

Additional funding has been sought to purchase COVID-19 related equipment. This includes scenario-based training props that are easy to sanitize, virtual based simulation training upgrades, sanitization measures, as well as projectors and sound equipment so instructors and staff can deliver in-service training off-site and remotely. Academy staff continue to evolve and work to maintain standards in this new world environment.



**Recruits in their COVID-19 Classroom – VPA Gymnasium**

### **CY/2020 Injury Report:**

The following represents injuries reported and documented for Calendar Year 2021:

- On 05-04-2021, a Level-III recruit experienced pain in their left side glute muscle during physical training in the gym. The recruit was doing standing jumps and squat jumps when they felt a sharp pain followed by soreness. The recruit declined medical treatment and a regimen of ice and rest followed the injury. Physical exercise was modified as needed and staff continued to monitor the recruit. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent the injury from occurring. This individual was subsequently able to complete Level-III phase training following this incident.
- On 05-04-2021, a Level-III recruit fell during a run during physical training, spraining their left ankle. The recruit was seen by the class medic and was given a regimen of ice and wrapping if needed. The recruit declined a follow-up medical appointment. Evaluation following this injury revealed that the recruit was not aware of the edge of the roadway, and this could have been prevented as the pavement was free of obstructions. This recruit did not graduate from basic training. The departure from basic training was unrelated to this injury.



- On 05-07-2021, a Level-III recruit experienced a sharp pain in the right shoulder while doing a front lean rest. The individual felt pain when putting full pressure on the shoulder. fell during a run during physical training, spraining their left ankle. The individual had cited a previous injury to that area. The recruit was seen by Occupational Health and underwent a regimen of physical therapy and was cleared. Evaluation following this injury revealed that knowledge of the previous injury could have potentially prevented this from occurring. This recruit did not graduate from basic training. The departure from basic training was unrelated to this injury.
- On 05-11-2021, a Level-III recruit reported foot pain as a result of running downhill. The recruit was seen by Occupational Health underwent a regimen of physical therapy and was cleared. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 05-12-2021, a Level-III recruit experienced pain in their left shoulder during specific exercises during use-of-force training. The recruit declined medical treatment and was asked to avoid specific exercises. Ice and over the counter pain relief was provided as needed. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 06-03-2021, a Level-III recruit reported their eyes were still irritated longer than normal, following exposure to oleoresin capsicum (*pepper spray*). The recruit was seen at the emergency room and diagnosed with a corneal abrasion. The recruit was given antibiotic eye drops for pain and inflammation. Evaluation following this injury revealed the nothing could have been done to prevent this from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 06-03-2021, a Level-III recruit reported their eyes were still irritated longer than normal, following exposure to oleoresin capsicum (*pepper spray*). The recruit was seen at the emergency room and diagnosed with a corneal abrasion. The recruit was given antibiotic eye drops for pain and inflammation and told to follow-up in 48 hours. Evaluation following this injury revealed the nothing could have been done to prevent this from occurring. This recruit did not graduate from basic training. The departure from basic training was unrelated to this injury.
- On 06-07-2021, a Level-III recruit reported a bug bite of unknown origin during flag call. The bite caused unusual swelling, redness, itching, and cellulitis at the bite site. The recruit requested medical treatment. The recruit requested medical attention after a few days because of the bite site symptoms worsening, the recruit was given antibiotics. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 06-09-2021, a Level-III recruit experienced pain in their bicep during a PT session consisting of a jog split up by pull-up rotations. During the second rotation of pull-ups the recruit reported an injury to the left bicep. The recruit declined medical treatment and was provided an ace bandage and ice. The recruit later asked for a follow-up appointment from

Occupational Health. Evaluation following this injury revealed a buildup of upper body strength could have assisted in the prevention of this event occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.

- On 06-23-2021, a Level-III recruit sustained an injury to their left wrist during use of force training. The recruit struck a bag with their left hand which resulted in a sharp pain. The recruit requested medical attention. Workman's compensation was notified, and a tele-health consultation occurred, followed by a visit to Occupational Health then X-rays at Rutland Regional Medical Center. Use of Force testing and evaluation was postponed until recruit was medically cleared. Evaluation following this injury revealed that if proper technique had been used the recruit would not have sustained the injury. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 07-21-2021, a Level-III recruit sustained a pulled muscle while sprinting during a tactical workout. The recruit requested medical treatment and was seen at the ER. The recruit was provided crutches and medication and a light activity profile until cleared by Occupational Health. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 10-26-2021, a Level-III recruit injured their foot during a group run. This occurred when the recruit tripped on the narrowing of the roadway. Immediate medical attention was declined, but the recruit requested re-evaluation the following day. The recruit had the injury evaluated at a medical appointment and received modified physical training until medically cleared. Evaluation following this injury revealed that more care and attention to the roadway would have prevented this injury from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 10-29-2021, a Level-III recruit reported injuring their knee during stretching, warm-up, and running during PT. Medical attention was declined, ice and anti-inflammatory medication was given by the class medic. Staff continued to monitor the injury. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.
- On 11-03-2021, a Level-III recruit injured their foot during a physical training regimen that consisted of a run and squats. The recruit requested medical attention. Ice, anti-inflammatory medication, and modified activities were put in place while waiting for an appointment with Occupational Health. Evaluation following this injury revealed that nothing could have been done to prevent this injury from occurring.
- On 11-18-2021, a Level-III recruit sustained a concussion during a team building relay that consisted of pushups, sled exercise, and sit-ups. The recruit hit their head on the floor during the sit-up portion of the relay. When evaluated by staff it was determined that the recruit had suffered a concussion. The recruit complained of their head being foggy, but no nausea or disturbed vision. Staff indicated verbal responses were slow and when the recruit was walking their gait appeared unsteady. Staff transported the recruit to the Emergency

Department. After rest and a continuous evaluation of symptoms the recruit was sent home when deemed safe. No PT related activities or any activities in which it is determined the recruit cannot participate safely until a follow-up appointment can be secured with the Concussion Clinic. Evaluation following this injury revealed that mats could have been used to prevent this injury from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training without incident.

- On 12-03-2021, a Level-III recruit reported a pain in the upper-middle part of their right foot after completing a run on the Academy grounds. The recruit declined medical treatment and staff will continue to evaluate for worsening symptoms. Evaluation following this injury revealed nothing could have been done to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 12-06-2021, a Level-III recruit reported a pain in their shoulder after a Use-of-Force exercise where the recruit had to practice falling forward. The recruit declined medical treatment and advised to modify activities as needed. Over the counter pain relief was provided as needed. Evaluation following this injury revealed better form could have been used to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.
- On 12-06-2021, a Level-III recruit reported a pain in their left elbow from hyper-extension after a Use-of-Force exercise. Immediate medical attention was received by staff and the class medic. The recruit's arm was wrapped to help prevent further injury and activities were modified. The recruit was evaluated further on the weekend by their doctor. The recruit was advised to modify activities as needed. Evaluation following this injury revealed better form could have been used to prevent this it from occurring. The recruit was able to graduate from basic training.

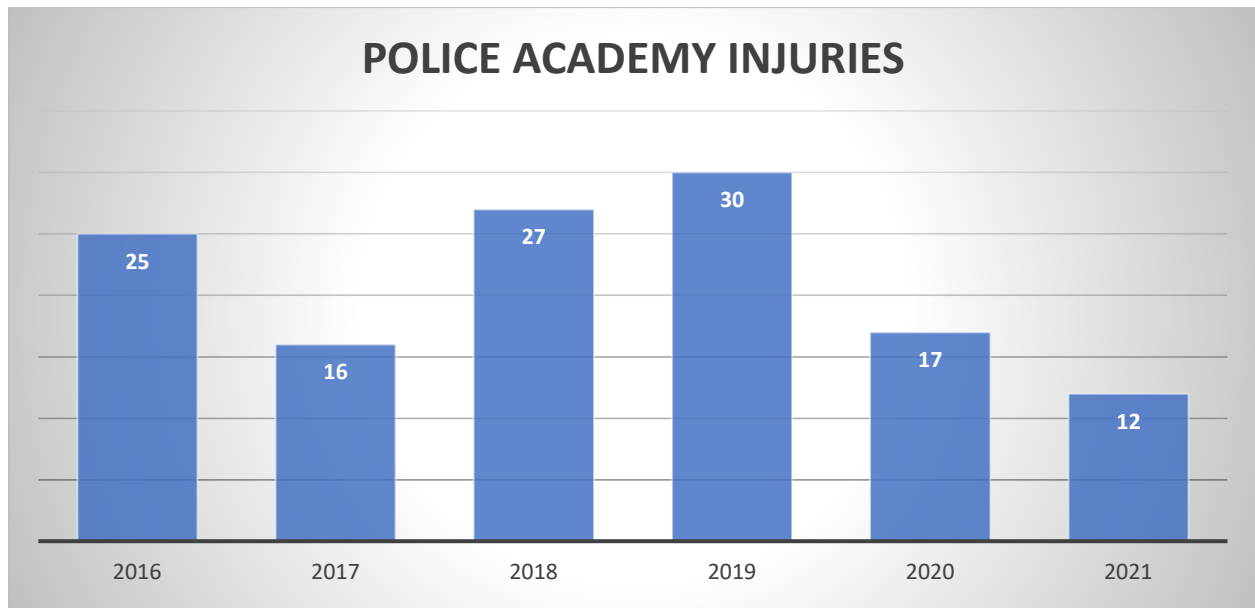
### **Conclusion:**

There was a total of **18** injuries of which 12 were OSHA reportable in 2021. This report illustrates **every** known report. Many of the reported injuries required only basic first aid, if that, and were not considered reportable by OSHA standards, as no medical treatment was sought. Every known reported injury was included in this publication to illustrate the detailed level of tracking and continued commitment the police Academy takes to mitigate, investigate, and prevent injury, despite the often rigorous and arduous demands required for training law enforcement officers both at basic and in-service levels. The Academy's level of documentation allows staff to continually make targeted changes to training practices where appropriate.

**Police Academy Annual Injuries Reported:**

INJURY TYPE	SKILL PERFORMED	LOCATION	COURSE NAME	ER / DR	Met OSHA 300 Reporting Requirements	COMPLETED TRAINING
Leg	Police Officer	Gym	Physical Fitness	No		Yes
Ankle	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	No		No
Shoulder	Police Officer	Second Floor	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	No
Foot	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	Gym	Use-of-Force	No		Yes
Eye	Police Officer	Grounds	Use-of-Force	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eye	Police Officer	Grounds	Use-of-Force	Yes	Yes	No
Arm	Police Officer	Grounds	Flag Call	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bicep	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wrist	Police Officer	Gym	Use-of-Force	Yes	Yes	Yes
Abdominal	Police Officer	Gym	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foot	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Knee	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	No		Yes
Foot	Police Officer	Gym	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Head	Police Officer	Gym	Physical Fitness	Yes	Yes	Yes
Foot	Police Officer	Grounds	Physical Fitness	No		Yes
Elbow	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	Yes		Yes
Shoulder	Police Officer	Gym	Use of Force	No	Yes	Yes

NOTE: This table reflects all injuries identified by the Vermont Police Academy, even those considered non-reportable by OSHA.

**2019 Police Academy Individual Injury Chart:**

**NOTE:** This table reflects all injuries identified by the Vermont Police Academy, even those considered non-reportable by OSHA until 2020.

OSHA 300 Recordable work-related injuries and illnesses are those that result in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, one or more days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, diagnosis of a significant injury or illness, loss of consciousness, or death.





## **Vermont Fire Academy**

### **Description of injury reporting:**

Injuries to Vermont Fire Academy staff and students requiring more than basic first aid are reported and documented by the Instructor In-Charge utilizing the Injury Report Form adopted by the Vermont Fire Academy and Police Academy. This form is completed at the time of incident. The Instructor In-Charge follows all instructions that are included with the Injury Report Form and notifies the Site Coordinator of the incident as soon as possible. The Site Coordinator will make any other notifications that are required and follow up with the student's agency point of contact to inform them of the incident and remind them to file a First Report of Injury and notify the Vermont League of Cities and Towns when applicable. An investigation is completed by the Site Coordinator to determine what happened and how to prevent further incidents if possible. The Vermont Fire Academy Site Coordinator will file any staff reports of injury with the Vermont Department of Human Resources. All completed Injury Report Forms are stored confidentially.

### **General summary of how injuries are handled on and off campus:**

When someone becomes injured and needs more than basic first aid or experiences a medical event while participating at any Vermont Fire Academy function, medical assistance shall be called for immediately. The majority of Vermont Fire Academy staff and students are also medically trained, and the academy provides essential first response equipment to begin assessment and treatment while waiting for local emergency services to respond. No Vermont Fire Academy Instructor or Student may return to any form of Fire Academy activity without a formal physician's letter stating the person's allowable level of activity.

### **2020 Injuries and Mitigation:**

In 2021 the Vermont Fire Academy had a total of two reportable injuries. Outlined below are the injuries that occurred with summaries of the investigative findings and any recommended changes to prevent re-occurrences.

- Arm Injury – March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021** While participating in forcible entry practical skills as part of a Firefighter I program, a student was struck in the wrist with the back side of a flat head axe. In this skill, students work as a team of two to force a locked window open. To complete the skill, one student holds a prying tool called a halligan between the window's upper sill and lower sash while the other student drives the halligan into the space with the back of a flat head axe. During the skill the student using the axe struck the halligan but allowed the axe to hit the wrist of the other student. The student was treated by medically trained instructors on site and drove to the hospital to have it checked. The student returned shortly after with a note to take the day off and continue work the following day. This skill is used throughout forcible entry training with very low occurrence of injury. Continued discussion of safety, tool placement, and communication will continue to be taught as part of the skill. There are no recommended changes at this time.
- Seizure – October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021** While participating in air pack training as part of a Firefighter I program, a student had a seizure while walking, and fell to the ground. Students had put on all personal protective equipment including air packs and were breathing their supplied air. The students then practiced walking while wearing all the equipment which is when the student began to seize and fell. Care was immediately given by medically trained instructional staff and local emergency services were contacted. The student stopped seizing after a short time and regained consciousness. The student was transported to a local hospital to be evaluated. The student had a history of seizures but had gone significant time without occurrence. The incident happened while performing low intensity competency training with the air pack and was caused by a pre-existing medical condition that the Fire Academy was unaware of. There are no recommend changes at this time.

### **Prevention:**

The Vermont Fire Academy continues to make safety a priority at our courses and programs and reinforces best safety practices for our students and instructors inside and out of Academy training. Through all our training we continue to move forward with safety in mind and strive to be proactive, so we don't need to be reactive. The two reportable injuries sustained this year were determined to be unavoidable and all practical safety processes were in place.

We continue to monitor our processes and implement new ideas that can improve what we do. This past year we purchased several more tents to provide cover during inclement weather, but more importantly, shade on hot summer days. We have purchased specially designed chairs that can be used as ice baths to help cool individuals during live fire training. Our Rehabilitation Policy has continued to be successful in ensuring student and instructor safety and our early blood pressure screening continues to give students opportunity to seek help from primary care and be successful in their program.

Specific practical skills are more high risk than others, one of the highest risk skills we perform is live fire training in our Firefighter I and II programs. In this training students complete team-based skills in actual live fire conditions. This past year we have made several schedule changes which improve safety and learning during these training events. The biggest change has been turning a single extremely physically demanding day of training into two shorter days. This change provides greater opportunity for learning and growth of the skills performed and greater time for rest and rehabilitation.

Due to COVID we were again forced to run our FY 2021 Firefighter I programs into the summer months of 2021. We found ourselves providing live fire training for these programs in late June creating increased safety risks for our students and instructors due to environmental conditions. Had it not been for our continued efforts to create safe training, these events would not have been possible. Our tents, misting fans, ice machines, monitoring equipment, personnel, and policies made us successful in not only being safe, but being able to complete training. The Fire Academy has taken a hard look at our schedules in an effort to keep this training out of the warmest months in the future. It was a significant challenge for the administration and Lead Instructors, but we plan to complete all of our FY 2022 Firefighter I and II burns by May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.

COVID-19 has continued to affect the Vermont Fire Academy just like everyone else in the world. Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to provide safe learning environments for our students and instructors. We have created virtual online classrooms, connected multiple small classrooms electronically, created hybrid learning opportunities, and allowed for safe in-person training in the classroom and practical setting by creating and following policies and procedures. In the past nineteen months out of more than three hundred Vermont Fire Academy students, only six of our students have contracted COVID-19, four of which occurred outside of the training environment.

Cancer prevention will always remain a talking point and something that the Vermont Fire Academy works to prevent through education and decontamination. We talk with our students at length about the carcinogens that are transferred into and onto personal protective equipment and firefighters themselves as they engage in real world firefighting and training. We discuss the importance of decontaminating equipment and ourselves after being exposed to these hazards. The Fire Academy provides students and instructors cleaning wipes, designed specifically for firefighters to wash their face, hands, and neck during our training events. We also provide bags for taking personal protective equipment home, so it won't cross contaminate vehicles and those who get in them. We offer training participants access to showers at the Fire Academy to students and instructor to reinforce taking care of yourself after calls and training.

With all that is going on in the world, we have had another great year of safe training. We will continue to look for ways of improving our policies, procedures, and equipment before incidents occur; and will remain vigilant in investigating all incidents that occur to determine if there is a

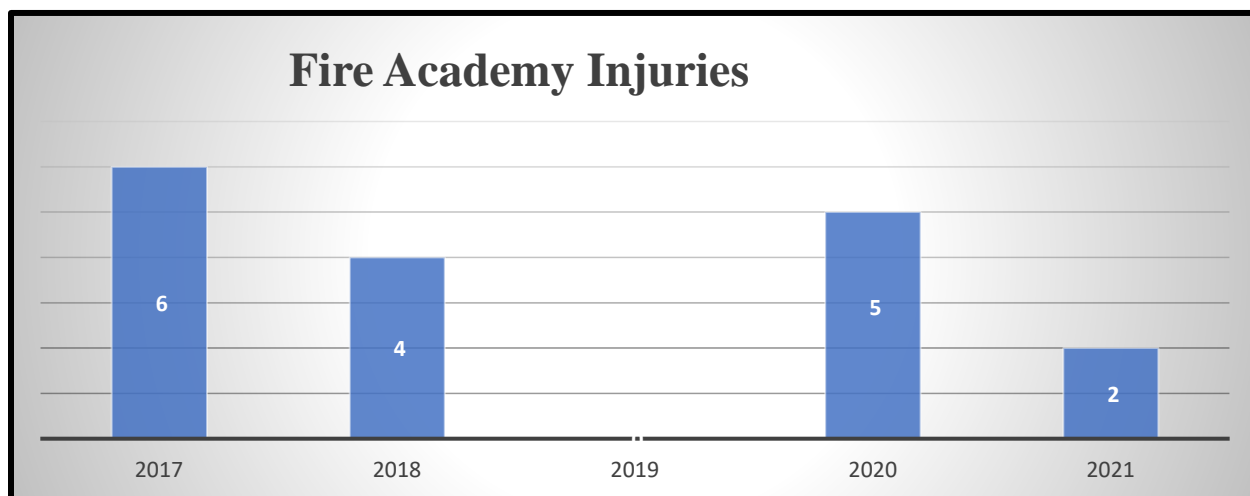
need for change. We will also continue to work closely with our partners at the Vermont Police Academy in sharing ideas and resources.

### **2020 Fire Academy Individual Injury Chart:**

INJURY TYPE	SKILL PERFORMED	LOCATION	COURSE NAME	ER / DR	Met OSHA 300 Reporting Requirements	COMPLETED TRAINING
Wrist Injury	Forcible Entry	Ryegate	Firefighter I	Yes	Yes	Yes
Seizure	SCBA	Orleans	Firefighter I	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* OSHA 300 Recordable work-related injuries and illnesses are those that result in one or more of the following: medical treatment beyond first aid, one or more days away from work, restricted work or transfer to another job, diagnosis of a significant injury or illness, loss of consciousness, or death.

### **Fire Academy Annual Injuries Reported:**



## **FIRE AND POLICE INJURY SUMMARY**

The goal of both Training Academies is to not have any injuries, and to minimize those situations where injuries may occur. Certainly, the demand for realistic physical activity including running, raising and climbing ladders, lifting equipment, engaging in one-on-one restraint drills, using heavy equipment, training with animals or conducting routine drills exposes the students and

instructors to many hazardous conditions. Well-planned activities with strict monitoring by trained professionals allow for a reduction in all injury areas.

The Safety Sub-Committee conducts after action reviews of injuries and identify any potential cause. Depending on frequency or severity, we initiate modifications to mitigate future injuries whenever possible. It has also become a practice to be proactive and identify those situations that might cause injuries and determine how to reduce the risk.

Whenever possible a student knows the physical expectations being placed upon them weeks in advance of a training so that they are able to prepare. Students are frequently briefed on injury mitigation and reporting, provided adequate pre-activity warm-ups (when appropriate), and given protective gear when risk of injuries are foreseeable. Furthermore, instructors are trained in injury prevention and first aid / CPR. First aid kits are readily available to students and instructors and personnel with higher levels of medical training are identified beforehand in case an injury occurs. It is also required that a medical clearance checks take place in high-risk training. Considering the volume and intensity of training for fire fighters and law enforcement officers in a myriad of physically demanding disciplines, injuries are minimal. This year there was one injury for approximately every 4,450 hours of training. The Academies and Safety Sub-committee are committed to continually find ways to improve safety in training and reduce injuries.